



For immediate release

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Public Health mass gathering requirements and guidance for Phase 2

Helena – With Phase 2 of the Governor’s Reopening the Big Sky strategy taking effect June 1, there is now an option for limited mass gatherings in the community.

A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event with a large number of people attending that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event. Examples include concerts, festivals, conferences and sporting events.

Phase 2 allows groups up to 50 people to gather in circumstances where 6 feet distancing between individuals and/or household members may not be possible. For groups greater than 50 people, adequate physical distancing is required, a written plan developed, and Lewis & Clark Public Health should be consulted.

Guidance for gatherings and events can be found at <https://www.lccountymt.gov/health/covid-19/phase-two-guidance.html>. Submit a plan to Lewis and Clark Public Health at least 10 days in advance of your event.

Organizers should continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees for mass gatherings.

Mass gathering events should adhere to the following Phase 2 LCPH requirements:

1. No more than 50 people where appropriate physical distancing cannot be maintained. However, LCPH still recommends physical distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals and non-family groups in gatherings of any size.
2. Follow frequent sanitizing protocols. Before the event, disinfect surfaces and objects that people will touch. Consider disinfecting common hand-contact areas, like doorknobs and pens, at least once each hour during the event.
3. Strongly encourage or require the use of cloth facemasks for attendees and staff.
4. Encourage participants to stay away from the event if they are sick or leave if they start having COVID-19 symptoms. Post signs to remind attendees to go home if they have signs of illness. Posters are available at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
5. Share information about COVID-19 with staff, participants, suppliers, vendors, and others. Keep them up to date on your local situation, and designate a way for them to communicate with you if they have concerns.

Additionally, event organizers should consider providing tissues, no-touch disposal receptacles, hand-washing facilities with soap and water and single-use towels throughout the facility. Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol placed in several locations can also encourage hand hygiene. Physical barriers such as clear-plastic sneeze guards, high-efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation are other mitigation measures.

For those providing services, assess staff at the beginning of each shift. Send home anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, including cough, difficulty breathing, fever, repeated shaking with chills, chills, body aches, headache, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell. Food servers should wear gloves and follow required food-safety standards. Self-service food bars and buffets are not permitted at this time.

Consider avoiding the use of event staff who are at high risk for complications from COVID-19, like those over age 65 and those who have chronic medical conditions.

Additionally, if an event has staff or designated people to fill certain roles during an event, keep in mind they may have to stay home if they are sick or caring for a sick child or family member.

If you have questions, please call Lewis and Clark Public Health at 457-8900. Thank you for protecting our community from COVID-19!

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